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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION -- KUWAITI MEDIA COVERAGE OF VIOLENCE
IN GAZA

SUMMARY

Tuesday, December 30, 2008

¶1. (U) Summary and Comment. As of Tuesday, December 30, all Kuwaiti Arabic and English language print dailies continued to publish headlines and pictures related to the ongoing situation in Gaza. In addition to the continued front page news updates, a number of Editors-in-Chief offered editorials on the subject, championing the plight of the Palestinians in Gaza, all harshly criticize the policies and activities of Israel, but there is also recollection of Palestinian acquiescence to Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and limited criticism of Hamas. Many dailies also took a local angle to the story, covering with both photographs and articles the December 28 rally that occurred in front of Kuwait's Parliament building. The coverage is likely to continue to dominate the front pages and editorial sections of Kuwaiti's print dailies until the current round of violence in Gaza wanes or ceases. End Summary and Comment.

¶2. (U) Block quotes

-- Under the headline 'Gaza and Martin Neimoller,' liberal Shi'ite columnist Ahmed Al-Sarraf editorialized in the moderate Arabic daily the Al-Qabas (12/30): "In response to the request by the Chief of the Political Bureau of Hamas asking Kuwaitis to help Palestinian victims in Gaza, I can't help but wonder where these Palestinians and specially people in Gaza were when Kuwait was attacked and robbed by the toppled barbarian Iraqi regime? Did they not cheer for the Iraqi invaders when they roamed the streets of Kuwait and applauded their incursion of Kuwait? Did they not gloat when Iraqi tanks demolished Kuwaiti homes, and destroyed our institutions? But I guess people have a short memory! However, in spite of all that I cannot respond today to their reactions then in the same way. My patriotic beliefs oblige me to give whatever I can from my money, and do whatever I can to help them. Not because I fear what the future would bring, but because if I do not stand by them I would be betraying my own convictions."

-- Conservative Arabic daily the Al-Watan published an editorial by Nabeel Al-Awadhi where he outlined ten measures that Arab leaders must take in reaction to Gaza (12/30): "Palestinian blood will not go to waste: this crime will not be like previous ones. Many things will change in the Islamic-Zionist struggle. The changes must be equal to the size of the crime; otherwise we ought to be a dead [Arab] nation." Mr. Al-Awadhi then lists his ten suggested measures, which are summarized as follows: "Israel claims that some Arab leaders gave it the green light to attack Gaza; I have no doubts that this could be true, but when the identity of these leaders is revealed they should be hit by a shoe. Our governments

must be questioned about the amount of money they have spent in the past years on arm deals, and weapons that are supposedly purchased to defend Arabs against the enemy. They should check the expiration dates of these weapons as they rot in the warehouses, instead of being put to use. Dr. Awad Al-Qarni gave a Fatwa (Islamic verdict) that allows for hitting any Israeli target wherever it might be; I commend you Dr. Qarni on this Fatwa. Any Arab or Muslim state that still maintains diplomatic relations with Israel should be considered a traitor."

--Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah, a pro-government Arabic daily, Ahmmmed Jarallah, opined on the first page of his newspaper (12/30): "Hamas has rejected offers from Arab countries to provide treatment to injured Palestinians. It seems that Hamas is asking Egypt to cancel its agreements with the international community, and Saudi Arabia to send its troops to support the group, and Kuwait to send its wealth to Khaled Meshaal -- the Hamas leader. We are facing a small group that is firing at their own people and wants to spread this fire to the Arab world. We should stop this group and everybody should have a sense of reality to retain our power. Some people distorted our Islamic beliefs, our Arab identity, and our understanding of world events. We do not have to exaggerate. We have seen pools of Palestinian blood due to the random shooting of rockets."

Carrying the headline 'If Something Must Be Said,' daily columnist and publisher Ahmed Deyain wrote in the fist page of the daily Alam Alyawm (12/30): "The ugly carnage that Zionists are executing in Gaza amidst international collaboration, obvious American support, equal Arab cowardliness, and intra-Palestinian divisions, in addition to the failure of any peace process initiatives, have put the Palestinian cause in its true framework. Simply, it is a

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struggle for the liberation of a nation from Israeli aggression. At the same time, what happens now in Gaza, and what happened earlier in Lebanon reconfirms once again that the basis of all struggles in our region is the struggle between the will of the resistance movements and the Israeli attempts, and those who support them, to break this will and weaken Arab resilience. The aim is to force the Arabs to kneel down, and surrender to the might of an occupying power."

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